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## **SCHOOL READINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ALERT**

**ALERT Number:** SR /TA # 05-01

**Date:** December 16, 2004

X **Priority Schools**  
X **Severe Need Schools**

**TO:** School Readiness Council Liaisons

**FROM:** Paul Flinter, Chief  
Bureau of Early Childhood and Social Education

Peter Palermino, Manager  
Child Care Team

**SUBJECT:** **Fatherhood Initiative**

The State Departments of Education and Social Services are issuing this TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ALERT to provide guidance to School Readiness Councils and their sub grantees on **Fatherhood Initiative**. Involving fathers in School Readiness Programs addresses two of the ten mandated program components - parent involvement and family literacy. We have previously issued a TA - ALERT (SR/TA 00-01) that provided guidance on parent involvement, parent education and outreach.

As you know, Parent Involvement and Family Literacy must be addressed by school readiness programs as part of the ten program components required by the legislation [C.G.S. Section 10-16q(a) (1-10)]. These requirements are also incorporated in the Connecticut School Readiness Preschool Program Evaluation System. Parent Involvement and Family Literacy activities include involving parents - mothers and fathers - in:

- their child's education
- parenting education and outreach
- identification of their education and training needs
- the program's governance

### **RATIONALE**

School Readiness programs have a unique opportunity to assist parents to understand their child's early education and care developmental needs. Over 100 studies on parent-child relationships reported that a loving and nurturing father was as important for a child's happiness, well-being, and social and academic success as having a loving and nurturing mother<sup>1</sup>.

Research emphasizes the important role of fathers in helping children to learn the standards of behavior for their group and to develop the capacity of self-regulation<sup>2</sup>. In fact, higher levels of father involvement in children's typical routines and activities are associated with fewer behavior problems, higher levels of sociability and a high level of performance among children and adolescents<sup>3</sup>.

Fathers can help School Readiness programs be more effective at promoting children's development and learning, while the School Readiness programs can help fathers be more effective in their children's lives.

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Working to provide quality early care and education programs to Connecticut's families**

## BEST PRACTICE

The following are examples of "best practices" that programs can adopt as part of their comprehensive service delivery:

- Programs recognize that mothers as well as fathers are partners with staff in the education of children and that each brings strengths to that relationship.
- Programs provide staff development and training to ensure that fatherhood efforts are fully integrated into the services offered to families.
- Program staff respects individual differences in mothers and fathers including culture, language, and parenting styles.
- Programs acknowledge that fathers need the same support and assistance that mothers need.
- Programs seek linkages to collaborating agencies, ostensibly at the neighborhood level, where services should be offered so that fathers feel comfortable accessing services.
- Programs seek and provide opportunities for father involvement at various levels.
- Programs create a welcoming environment for fathers, where verbal and non-verbal language and cues avoid stereotyped generalizations about men, and equipment, resources, and types of parenting activities are diverse and relevant to both mothers and fathers.

## RESOURCES

The following online resources are available to assist programs:

- [www.fatherhoodinitiative.state.ct.us](http://www.fatherhoodinitiative.state.ct.us): for general information, including events and updates, on the Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut.
- [www.fatherhood.hhs.gov/index.shtml](http://www.fatherhood.hhs.gov/index.shtml): for a Toolkit for Fatherhood developed by the Department of Health and Human Services.
- [http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/hsbulletin77/cont\\_77.htm](http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/hsbulletin77/cont_77.htm): to access the June 2004 Head Start Bulletin on Father Involvement.
- <http://nccic.org>: for information and resources on the child care delivery system, including fatherhood, maintained by the National Child Care Information Center.
- <http://www.hsnrc.org/fatherhood/>: presentations, information, and resources on father involvement in Head Start. It also offers discussion forums, where local program leadership, staff, and parents can ask questions, exchange information, and share resources with their peers.

Should you have any questions or comments regarding these materials, please contact:

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Attention: Amparo Stella Garcia  
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## ENDNOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Rohner, R. and Veneziano, R. The importance of father love: History and contemporary evidence. *Review of General Psychology* 54. 2001. pp. 382-405.

<sup>2</sup> Lamb, M.E. *The father's role: cross-cultural perspectives*. Hillsdale, NJ.: Erlbaum. 1987.

<sup>3</sup> Gadsen, V. and Ray, A. Engaging Fathers: Issues and considerations for early childhood fathers. *Young Children* 57. 2002. pp.32-42.

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